CANADIAN URBAN INSTITUTE

THE REVITALIZATION OF THE PARQUE METROPOLITANO DE LA HABANA

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In June 1995, the Canadian Urban Institute and the City of Havana, Cuba signed an agreement directed to the ***Revitalization of the Parque Metropolitano de La Habana***, a three year technical assistance project focused on the strategy development and public participation processes of this ambitious urban and environmental project. This agreement was the first between a Canadian Non-Governmental Organization and a Cuban government agency begun at a critical juncture in the relationship between the two countries. Although there has been ongoing diplomatic and commercial relations between Canada and Cuba, the CUI project began in the midst of a new stage in those relations, a stage marked by the beginning of Canadian bilateral aid and the increasing involvement of Canadian NGO´s in Cuba. The signing of the agreement was preceded by a set of high level negotiations that demonstrated the priority that the Cuban government was awarding to this Canadian-Cuban exchange and to its focus on the Parque Metropolitano de La Habana.

The Canadian Urban Institute´s assistance focused on the development of a strategic planning process that is comprehensive and participatory by strengthening the capacity of the technical team to implement this process. This document is a report of the activities and results of this project. It first presents the context for the project and the main project areas. This is followed by a report of the activities undertaken. A final section analizes the factors that led to the project results.

1. CONTEXT : THE PARQUE METROPOLITANO DE LA HABANA

The Parque Metropolitano de La Habana is a 700 hectares expanse of land in the heart of the City of Havana. The Park borders the Almendares River, in the eastern side of the city, beginning in its mouth in the coast and following it for 9 kilometers as it winds its way through urban neighborhoods that reflect the diversity of the city's history and population. The Parque Metropolitano is one of 4 mayor parks along this river's basin and as such is an intrinsic part of the capital's green belt system (Figs. 1 and 2).

The *Almendares River*, running south to north from the center of the island towards the Atlantic ocean, has been an important element in the identity of the city from its earliest days. Historically, the river has marked the city's eastern most boundary, it has provided a source of fresh water for its inhabitants and has been the preferred route for travel into the countryside to the south. Along its course we find areas of important economic activity such as breweries, paper mills, sugar mills and tobacco plantations. The Almendares has been and is a ¨working river¨ and as such reveals today the contamination that characterize such bodies of water.

The first allocation of land along the urban riverbed for purposes akin to a "Park" was in 1926 when the Ministry of Public Works proposed the development of the Great Forest, which was designed and carried out in 1927 by French Arquitect and Urbanist Forestier. The *Bosque de La Habana* (the Forest of Havana) grew alongside both margins of the River between the neighborhoods of Kohly and Nuevo Vedado. Other areas of the urban riverbed -such as the Tropical Gardens and the La Polar Gardens - were developed as recreation areas by breweries which used them for especial events. In the 1930´s, a club known as the "friends of the forest" advocated strongly for the

expansion of the forest into a large park of over 700 hectares. In 1959, another area of the riverbed located just below the Almendares Bridge became Almendares Park, a park that is much loved by *habaneros*.

But it was not until 1963, when it appeared in the City's first Master Plan, that the Metropolitan Park is part of any formal city planning document. Since then it has appeared as a principal project in a number of plans for the City. As the city evolved its green belt system -with the development the Lenin and Zoological Parks and the Botanical Gardens- the idea of the Parque Metropolitano began to occupy its place in the fabric of the city. The Park appears in the Master Plan currently in effect, which was developed in 1984.

In 1991, just in the beginning of the economic crisis caused by the cut of support from the former socialist countries, the Parque Metropolitano became a budgeted state enterprise. Its purpose is to develop and implement projects that would lead to the Gran Parque Metropolitano de La Habana. Under the Direction of Jose Enrique Fornés, the Park's Chief Architect, the technical team of the Park developed the Park's Master Plan in 1994. The Master Plan, with its ingenuity and great detail, allowed policy makers to envision the potential for the area. This has helped to attract the attention of high level government officials to the development project. [1]

With the change in provincial government in 1994, a new Director was appointed to carry out the development. The new director focused early in the development of a young and energetic team of professionals that could both gain the confidence of the local city government and attract attention of foreign investors to its projects. At the start of this project, the Park had a vision of what it wanted to accomplish, had growing government support for its endeavor and the leadership necessary to carry it out. It was time for revitalization, for purposive work directed at the development of a long awaited dream for the city of Havana.

1.1 Urban Development and Environmental Protection

The River and the Park define a very ambitious urban project that intertwines the need for solutions to serious urban environmental problems and the complexity of urban development. As an urban development project, the Park proposes the creation of 16 attraction poles that prioritize social uses and vary from a marina to a factory-museum, stadiums and sports facilities, restaurants, forests etc. Some of these areas require full investment and others require reconstruction, modernization and maintenance. The estimated cost of this development is over 110 million *pesos*. [2].

Unlike other Havana parks, like the Lenin Park and the National Botanical Garden, that started out with open spaces, the Metropolitan Park is part of the urban fabric of the city and thus the future Park has to emerge from areas that currently hold a variety of uses. Only 15% of the park area is currently used as a park. The bulk of the area currently houses industries and farm land, a range of housing stock that includes from mansions to slums, as well as quarries and other installations. In some cases, the Park must coexist with what´s already there, in others it must negotiate its space and still others, the Park must convince that they should move elsewhere in order to allow the Park to emerge. This complex situation makes the revitalization of the Park a challenge in terms of the allocation of its space, its strategy towards specific development projects as well as its strategy towards a process of planning that will lead to the Park's long range development and maintenance

Although most urban projects today are conscious of environmental issues, this one is much more so because of its explicit environmental content. In order to develop, the Park has to provide some solution to several key environmental issues: the clean up of the Almendares River which

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[1] Parque Metropolitano de La Habana, *Plan Director*, 1994

[2] Ibid. Plan Director, 1994.

serves as its axis, the deforestation of most of the Park land, the cleanup of solid wastes and the general maintenance of the area.

Reforestation: At this time, only 5% of the park area is occupied by forests[3] which presents a problem not only to the identification of the area as a Park but also to the sustenance of the River. The small forested area, which includes some beautiful respite areas in the city such as the Forest of Havana and the Forest Park, is also in great need of care. In 1992, the Park was awarded the right to develop its own reforestation plan which formally was part of the plans of the four municipalities which are included in the Park. The task is to develop a plan that accomplishes the reforestation of this large area.

Cleanup of the Almendares River: The estuary of the Almendares is 402 km^2 and includes the contribution not only of the main but of several smaller rivers and streams, may of which cross densely populated urban areas. It is the discharge directly into these rivers and streams of the wastewater of urban neighborhoods that constitutes the Almendares´ main source of contamination.[4] These are both sewers and non focal sources of social wastes almost all untreated. The untreated wastes of industries is the second main source of contamination. The River´s own cleaning capacity is hampered by the stoppage of most of its stream by a dam constructed just outside of Havana, the pluvial drainage of organic and inorganic wastes and the severe deforestation of its margins. Aside from reforestation and the general cleanup of the river´s margins, the solution for the River involves the development of alternatives for the discharge of raw sewage into the river. Up to now, the solution has gone along the more conventional routes of large systems two of which are planned but not fully constructed. Given the economic situation the possibility of completing these systems is small. Alternatives such as natural systems and local solutions are now emerging, which seem like more realistic routes to this critical goal. Since the Park has responsibility for the largest length of the river and that the river´s most contaminated area is in the Park, it has a large role in the development of solutions for the River.

Cleanup of Solid Wastes: Throughout the area of the Park one finds countless uncontrolled small to medium solid waste dump sites where both government agencies and the public rid themselves of their garbage. The most common garbage found is domestic, residues from construction and demolitions, agricultural and animal wastes, as well as industrial wastes.[5] The solutions here range from fining those who dump to the development of recycling programs and the education of the population.

At this point in time, the classic contradiction between development and environment is not the mayor issue in the Park today because atr this stage the Park´s development is concentrated in areas compatible with environmental restoration: the re-creation of natural habitats, reforestation and the clean up of the river and the territory. But this problem cannot be discarded for the future and planning needs to take into account the pressures that will surely develop once this area is an attractive, natural oasis in the middle of the city.

1.2 Public Involvement

As is true of many urban development projects, the Metropolitan Park of Havana began and advanced significantly as a technical project, where the planning was done by professionals working

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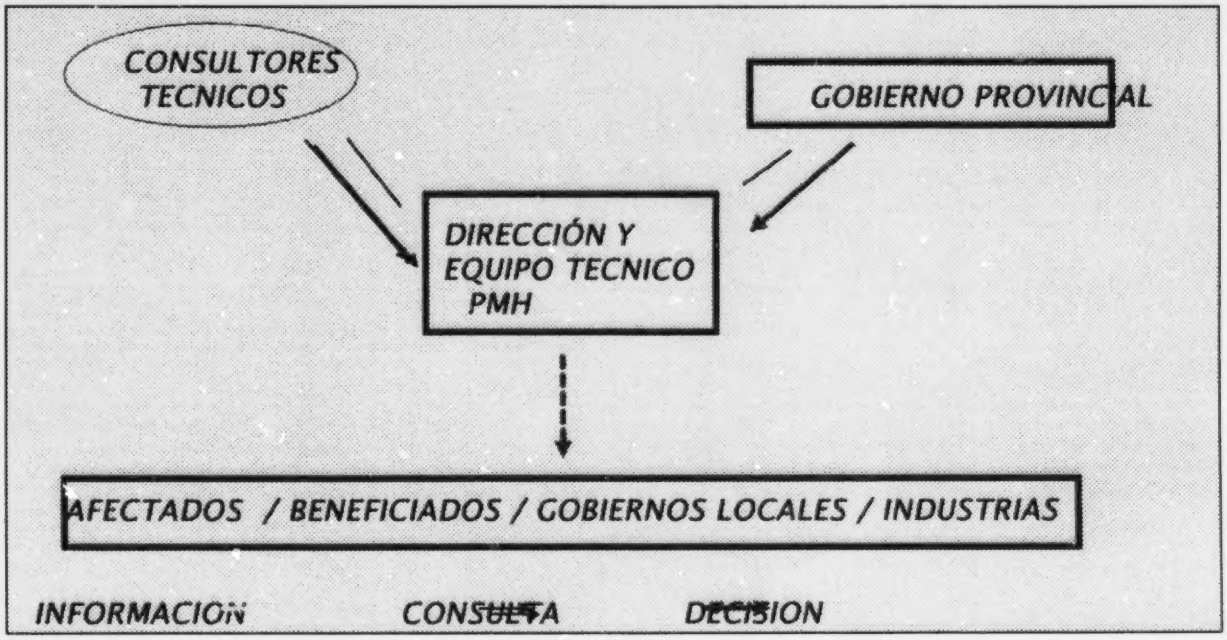
[3] Suárez Zarrigues, Teresa, et al. (1994). *Ordenación de Bosques de las Áreas del Parque Metropolita-no.* Empresa Nacional de Proyectos Agropecuarios, MINAGRI.

[4] Rivero, G. Carlos González y Pascual Peñalver. *Reducción de la Carga Contaminante de las Principales Corrientes Superficiales de la Provincia Ciudad de La HabanaÑ Rios Cojimar, Luyanó y Almendares.* (Estudio 57. Empresa Hidroeconómica, Instituto de Hidroeconomía, 1986, y Pérez Zaballa, Manuel. Estudio Sanitario y de Autodepuración del Río Almendares. Dirección Provincial de Auqueductos y Alcantarrillado, 1995.

[5] Equipo Tecnico, *La Situacion del Entorno Natural del Parque Metropolitano.* PMH, 1996.

alone or in collaboration with small groups of other professionals. At the time that the agreement with the CUI was signed, the Park had engaged in very limited work directed towards public information and no work was done towards involving the public in the process of development. There were very limited inputs into the planning process of the Park, which was being carried out by a small group of technicians in isolation. Figure 1 depicts the situation in 1995.



The Park crosses four of Havana's largest and most populous municipalities -Cerro, Plaza de La Revolución, Marianao y Playa- and is intrinsically tied to the urban fabric of the city. The Park must co-exist and in some cases negotiate its space with the communities, organizations, state enterprises, industries and military installations currently in the territory. Communication with all these sectors - which will be directly affected by the development of the Park- and their participation in the process is critical not only to the acceptance of the Park as an urban project that belongs to the residents of the city (and therefore must be cared for by them) but also to the development of the environmental consciousness that will guarantee both its development and its maintenance in the long range. As these issues were examined in the process of developing a strategy for the revitalization of the Park, the participation of the communities and entities affected by the project became a vital issue for the Park.

The process of participation has confronted two important challenges. The first is the preparation of the Team to design and implement a participatory process that was useful, realistic to the planning task. Like most other technical teams, the Park´s had little background on this type of work so the first task was readying the team for this work through training and capacity building. It entailed also a trial and evaluation of the team´s work in a community in the border of the Park. A good part of the technical assistance offered by the CUI project has been directed to the development of this process and has included training in group development, facilitation of groups and meetings, methods for entering and assessing community needs, etc.

The second challenge was designing a participatory process that took into account the Cuba situation, that is, the process could in no way be *imported,* but rather, it had to fit easily into the local situation. In order to do this, we conducted and analysis of the structure of local governance and

social organization in Cuba, which led to the selection of the Popular Councils as the most appropriate unit for the process.

The Popular Council is the smallest unit of government, organized at the community level and made up of 10 to 15 delegates that are elected directly by their constituents as well as representatives of the main economic, social and service institutions in the area. In the Popular Councils one finds representatives of the mass organizations- the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR´s) and the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC)-, the schools, the policlinics and family doctors, the sports and culture ministries, etc. Given the makeup of the Council and its mandate to coordinate activity at the local level and resolve local issues, it was seen as the key element in a participatory process for the Park.

The President of the Popular Council is a member of the Municipal Assembly and of the Municipal Administrative Council, the legislative and administrative organs at the Municipal level. The Municipal government is controls municipal resources -economic, social, etc- and deploys them according to its own priorities. The Park then, has access to the 4 Municipal governments both directly -as an entity *located* in the Municipality- and through the Popular Councils with which it works. A similar structure exists at the provincial level, which is the unit of government which administratively and economically controls the Park since it is a budgeted unit within the Provincial Administrative Council. The Park can approach this body directly or through the Municipal Presidents which are members of the Council. In general, the Park approaches the Provincial Assembly after having discussed and negotiated the issue at every level below.

1.3 Project Management

The **CUI´s Toronto Office** is responsible for the overall financial management of the project, the selection of Canadian professionals for placements in Cuba, reporting to CIDA on the progress of the project as well as overall management and administration.

In Havana, the **Parque Metropolitano/CUI Project** is integrated to the overall administration of the Parque Metropolitano de La Habana. The CUI has no identity outside of the Park and works with and within the structure of the Park. The only paid staff of the project, the **project manager**, works directly under the Director of the Parque Metropolitano de La Habana, who is the CUI **project director.** The project manager provides technical assistance to Park personnel in strategy development, strategies for public involvement and some areas of management and administration as well as coordinates the exchange of Cuban and Canadian professionals and takes responsibility for the local financial management of the project.

The Park´s **Team** is composed of the Park´s Technical and Administrative personnel. It includes:

Julio Reyes, Park Director and Director of the CUI project.
Associate Director for Administration, Maura Salmerón
Chief Architect, Jose Fornés
Sociologist Marilyn Fernández, Coordinator of the Technical team and Director of the Env Education, Communication and Participation Program.
Ramiro Sánchez, Agronomist and Director of the Agriculture and Forestry Program
Frank González, Hydraulic Engineer and Acting Director of the Environmental Restoration Program.
Eva Leyva, Director of the SocioCultural Program
Raimundo Cabrera, Director of the Protection Program

Guadalupe González, Architect and the Park´s Planner.
Dulce Almonte, Forestry engineer
Harahy Gámez, Geographer and Agriculture Specialist
Lourdes Gonzalez, Agronomist and Forestry Specialist
Yociel Marrero, Chemical Engineer (on personal leave)
Ileana Saborit, Hydraulic Engineer (on maternity leave)
Conchita Batista, Ecologist and Env Education Specialist
Tamara Valdes, Biologist and End Ed Specialist
Ernesto Morejon, Communication Specialist
Robin Viera, Arquitect
Isabel Guzman, Arquitect
Kenia Rodriguez, Arquitect
Ramon Garcia, State Contractor
Miguel Elvitir, Draftsman
Oneida Meulener, Computer Programmer and Analyst
Adrian Morales, Legal Advisor
Martitza Perez, Financial Manager
Alberto Guzman, Administrator of the Park.
Ilkys Martinez and Barbara Martinez, Administrative Assistants

This group has been in charge of the strategy development process and now is organized in teams that parallel the Park´s programs: the Agriculture and Forestry Program, Environmental Restoration, Environmental Education, Protection Socio Cultural Development Program, Facilities and Infrastructure Program. The training and capacity building has been directed towards this group.

A **Planning Group**, composed of the director and Vice-Director, program managers, and financial personnel was formed in July 1997 to oversee the overall planning for the park and in particularly to assure the timely execution of the five year work plan.

The Project Team and its planning group is supported by the following committees:

- An **Administrative Council**, appointed in September 1997 by Provincial Assembly, oversees the work of the Park and the project. The committee is comprised of key stakeholders with responsibility or interest in the work of the Park. This includes representatives from entities of the provincial government, the Vice-President of the Provincial Assembly, and the Presidents of the municipalities located in the Park.

- A ***Committee of Technical Consultants*** was created in December 1994 to advise the Park in technical areas related to its development. The Committee includes top academics and practitioners from several Havana universities and government agencies that advise the project in the fields of reforestation, hydraulic engineering, environmental education, among others.

- A ***Committee of NGO Consultants*** was created in October 1996 with the following objectives:
  - ⇒ To advise the PMH in its collaboration with foreign NGOs;
  - ⇒ To serve as a fiscal conduit for funds for projects in the Park. Often international agencies can only partner with Cuban NGOs and not government agencies to undertake projects.
  - ⇒ To develop joint projects between the PMH and Cuban NGOs.

In 1996, the Park became one of a few projects in the city of Havana that are supervised directly by the **Governmental Commission**, a group created to expedite the support of the central government to projects

and situations in the capital and comprised of key central government officials including ministers, officials of the council of ministers and others.

The **Management Committee** focuses specifically on the PMH-CUI project is composed of the Director of the Park, the project manager and the Director of the Secretariat for Collaboration. Four times a year this committee conducts and 3evaluation of the execution of the project.

The project is also supported by a group of institutions that provides ongoing technical assistance and mutual collaboration in an as needed basis. Chief among these are:

- The **Center for Environmental Education** of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment. This center has assisted in the development of strategies for environmental education to the public and to industries and participated in the Park´s activities.

- The recently created **Almendares Watershed Committee** of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, of which the Park is a strong component, will develop a strategy for the whole wateshed.

- The **Group for the Integral Development of the Capital** supports the work of the Park in the areas of water treatment, architecture and administration.

- The **Center of Hydraulic Resources** at the Polytechnic Institute Jose Antonio Echevarria have worked on the design of the natural water treatment system and will be coordinating the research which is part of that project.

1.4 Involvement of Women

Although not a specific initial goal, the project is notable for its involvement of women. The Pro-ject Manager and a full 60% of the Team members are female, including the two Associate Directors of the Park, one of which is the coordinator of the strategy process. Thus, much of the training and capa-city building delivered by this project has been of direct benefit to Cuban professional women working in the Park Team. There has also been a strong participation of women in the planning process at the four neighborhood Work groups. They two have benefited from the training in group development, planning
and environmental education offered in this project.

2. PROJECT AREAS

The project for the Revitalization of the Metropolitan Park of Havana has focused on several key areas that include: the strategy development process, project execution and management, public information and stakeholder involvement, training and capacity building, the exchange of professionals between Canada and Cuba, and the development of cooperative ties between organizations and entities with concerns akin to the Park´s.

2.1. THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The complexity of the Park project called for a strategy development process that would help organize the work of planning and development. In 1994, Jose Enrique Fornes, chief Architect for the Park, had developed a land use plan, the Master Plan, a detailed document establishing the main

elements of the Park. Also in 1994, the Park had begun a process of strategic planning with the Faculty of Economics of the University of Havana. This plan, which resulted in a thesis by two students began to analyze the main issues facing the park at that point: the financing of its development at the time of economic crisis in the country, the need to restructure, train and equip the staff, its lack of authority over the land and others. That initial strategic process served to outline the problems -which were many and severe- and to outline the potential inherent in the project.

As the park embarked in the process supported by the CUI, there had to be a process of consensus on how this strategic process would evolve and in June 1995, in a workshop led by Charles Bens, the Park staff began to delineate the process. Key stakeholders were identified and the steps outlined. But in fact, there was still no consensus within the staff on how to move forward or if it should move at all. In fact the first few months after that workshop involved the development of a work plan that was not part of any strategic process but rather reflected the studies and tasks necessary for the development of the Park along its traditional line. Beginning in October, through a series of discussions that focused on what the PMH-CUI project would be about, there came an initial consensus that in fact there would be a strategy development process led by Park staff and that it would be participatory, that is, it would involve the key stake holders in the Park project.

In December 1995, the Park began to work on a strategy development process which adapts the basic elements of strategy development to the reality of a project that (1) is already operating and that (2) has already gone through a strategy development process. It first of all, could not ignore the work that had already been done, and thus it needed to integrate it somehow and secondly, it had to advance beyond the initial general issues outlined in the first strategic plan. The steps of the Strategic Planning process as it is being implemented by the Park Team, is depicted in Table 1.

The first phase of the process, **Consensus**, involved an analysis of the previous strategic plan as well as the identification of key priority issues for the Park and the key stake holders involved with each issue. The review revealed that the first strategic process had identified the following as priority issues[6]:

- **the lack of legal authority of the Park organization over its territory**. The Park organization had no legal basis to enforce any regulations in its territory. The strategy developed was to obtain this legal authority by developing a set of bylaws and regulations

Table 1. The Strategic Planning Process

PHASE	ACTIVITY	INVOLVED
Develop consensus on Goal and the Nature of the Strategic Process	⇒ Develop consensus on the nature and objective of the Strategic Planning Process ⇒ Identify key priority issues in relationship to the Park at this stage ⇒ Identify key stake holders in relationship to each issue	⇒ Park staff ⇒ Professional Stakeholders
Information Gathering and Analysis	⇒ Situation Analysis: External Factors ⇒ Situation Analysis: Internal Factors	⇒ Park Staff ⇒ Communities ⇒ Industries ⇒ Professional Stakeholders
Mission,	⇒ Restate and prioritize key focus issues	⇒ Park Staff

[6] Oramas Liranza, L. y A. Hartman Torres, Aplicacion del Proceso Estrategico en El Parque Metropolita-no de La Habana. Tesis de Grado, Facultad de Economia, Universidad de La Habana. 1995.

Goals and Strategies	⇒ Determine Mission, Goals and Strategies for key focus issues	⇒ Professional Stakeholders
Action Plans	⇒ Integrate process with Involvement Strategy ⇒ Organize Stakeholder Work groups ⇒ Conduct diagnosis of local Conditions ⇒ Develop Strategy and Action Plans ⇒ Identify resources needed to carry out plans	⇒ Park staff ⇒ Communities ⇒ Industries ⇒ Professional Stakeholders

for the Park and the territory that would be presented to the Provincial Assembly for approval.

- **the lack of a full complement of qualified staff, capable of carrying out the work of the Park**. The goals in relationship to this issue were twofold: the first involved the development and approval of a new administrative and personnel plan that would be presented to the Provincial administration for approval and implementation and secondly the development of an ongoing way to build the capacity of the staff in technical, planning and administrative areas.
- **the lack of financing for key development and investment projects**. No clear strategy was developed in this area beyond the *possibility of international financing*.

In the process of analysis, all these issues were determined to be valid and critical to the development of the Park organization as well as to the revitalization of the Park and action would continue along each of these areas. But aside from the administrative problems, there where others areas that also demanded attention, which focused more closely on revitalization. These were:

- the natural environment in the Park (including the contamination of the river, the deforestation of the territory and waste management problems in the area),
- the need to involve stakeholders in the process of planning,
- the need for a new institutional and economic structure for the organization.
- the need to develop the capacity to protect the Park´s environment, facilities and visitors.

These issues were the focus of the **information gathering and analysis** stage that followed. The Team reviewed existing information and developed analyses of the problems in each area. These analysis were presented and amply discussed in the Team meetings. This initial analysis led to the selection of key areas for strategic development, which were framed conceptually as programs or areas of activity to develop within the Park. These were:

1. Reforestation
2. Ecological restoration
3. Facilities
4. Environmental education
5. Recreation
6. Economic self sufficiency
7. Institutional Development

The Team then moved to develop the mission of the revitalization as well as its goals and strategies.

The process of developing strategies has differed for each program, taking into account its mandate, its stakeholders and the specific issues to be resolved. In some cases, the strategies have emerged from the Park´s own analysis of the situation as well as consultation with key stakeholders while others have been part of the community based process of participation. For example, in the

environmental restoration area, the sections involving the River have been negotiated through a process of high level discussions and high level workshops with key decision makers. By contrast, the planning for the Recreation area takes place almost exclusively at the community level.

Focusing at the start in a specific areas allowed the Team to exercise its newly acquired planning skills first in the areas of their strongest expertise. From there, a process of intense discussion led to the framing of the Park´s mission and overall goals and strategies which are listed below. In many ways this process is ongoing as the strategy document is drafted, edited, circulated and discussed.

MISSION : TO CREATE AN URBAN PARK THAT IS ECOLOGICALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF THE POPULATION OF THE CITY OF HAVANA

VALUES THAT GUIDE THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:

1. THE RESTORATION, MAINTENANCE AND PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT
2. THE COMMITMENT TO A COMPREHENSIVE, INTERDISCIPLINARY, FLEXIBLE AND PLANNED PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT.
3. THE PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE PARK.
4. THE CONTINUOS SEARCH FOR SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

ONE	1997-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010
TO CREATE A GREEN SPACE IN THE CAPITAL, DEVOTING 80% OF THE PARK´S TERRITORY TO WOODED AREAS, AGRICULTU-RE AND URBAN GARDENS			
Develop a nursery of 7ha that meets the needs of the reforestation program of the PMH.			
To increase the forested area to 65% of the area of the Park taking into account the principles of urban forestry			
Promote the appropriate development of green areas in the zone of influence			
Establish an urban agricultural development that is organic, intensive and sustainable in assigned areas which amount to 21.5% of the Park´s territory.			
Improve the use and exploitation of the soil taking into account ecological criteria.			
Restore the currently established wooded areas through work directed to their care and maintenance			
Develop sources of water appropriate for use in reforestation and			

agriculture			
TWO	1997-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010
UNDERTAKE THE RESTORATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE AREA OF THE PARK, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE RESTORATION OF THE ALMENDARES RIVER.			
Promote the development of an integral strategy to the restoration of the Almendares River among the stakeholding institutions.			
Diminish industrial contamination in the territory through joint action with contaminating industries and the ministries responsible for them.			
Diminish social environmental aggression through the joint action between the Park and the surrounding communities			
Collaborate with the appropriate authorities in the development of projects directed to environmental restoration			

THREE	1997-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010
TO UNDERTAKE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL AND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE			
Revitalize the recreational facilities in the Park, restoring them both physically as well as in relationship to the services to be offered.			
Create new recreation facilities for the enjoyment of the population			
Plan and undertake the relocation of the population that resides today in the agricultural area, in marginal neighborhoods of spread in settlements throughout the Park´s territory			
Undertake the renovation of housing in the more urbanized areas of the Park.			
Complete the basic elements of the Park´s urban infrastructure such as roads, electrical and hydraulic networks, signalization, etc.			
FOUR	1997-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010
PROMOTE A LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENVIRONMENT THAT PERMITS THE RESTORATION OF THE DAMAGED AREAS, THE MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING HABITATS AND THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE PROCESS OF THE PARK´S DEVELOPMENT			
Undertake ongoing documentation of the situation of the Park´s most vulnerable natural resources.			
Integrate environmental education activities in the planning and execution of each restoration and/or development project			
Develop educational campaigns through the mass media directed to better the protection and care of the environment for Park workers, stake holde5rs and the general population			

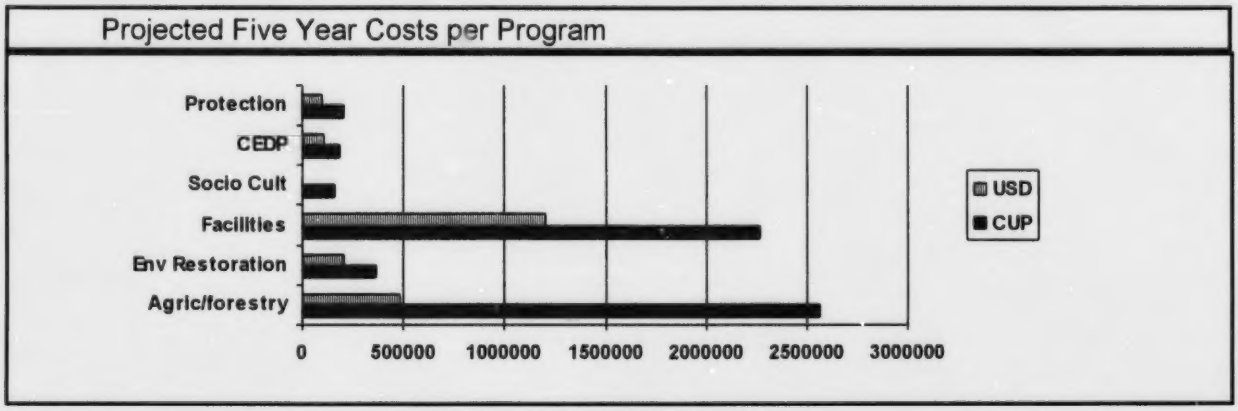
Carry out environmental impact assessment studies in all develop-ment projects in the PMH			
FIVE	1997-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010
DEVELOP A PROGRAM OF RECREATION FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS IN THEIR LEISURE TIME.			
Develop and promote recreation in the Park´s facilities.			
Develop and promote recreational programs in collaboration with the municipalities and the Popular Councils			
SIX	1997-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010
GUARANTEE THE ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PARK THROUGH A PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT IS COMPREHENSIVE AND DIVERSE.			
Change the economic structure of the Park in order to facilitate engaging in diverse economic activity.			
Guarantee the investment of the Cuban government in key development projects			
Promote the investments on the part of Cuban and foreign entities			
Continue to promote collaboration with foreign entities using their support as seed money for development projects.			
Promote the commercialization of Park services and products such as recreational and gastronomic services and agricultural and forestry products.			
Guarantee an income in CUP and US$ for the Park by: • taxing the profits of restaurants and sports and cultural facilities. • charging an environmental tax to industries and commercial entities located in the Park • charge a fee for the use of space and facilities			
SEVEN	1997-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010
DEVELOP THE INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE NECESSARY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT			
Guarantee the Park´s legal authority over its territory defining clearly is authority over the use f the soil and the installations located there			
Undergo the necessary administrative and organizational restructuring to support the Business Entity Parque Metropolitano and its legal responsibilities as a *protected urban zone*.			
Promote the efficiency of the enterprise in collaboration with the Park staff			
Promote the technical, professional and scientific advancement of the Park staff through a systematic program of training and capacity building.			
Implement a comprehensive protection plan that includes the physical protection of the installations, the security of workers and			

visitors in the Park as well as the protection of the environment.			
Integrate the participation of stakeholders to the process of planning and development of the Park.			

Sectoral Plans of Action. The Goals and Strategies come to life in the plans of action developed for each program sector. Five year action plans have been developed for the six programs that make up the Park´s structure for revitalization:

The Agriculture and Forestry program
The Environmental Restoration Program
The Facilities and Investments Program
The Communication, Environmental Education and Participation Program
The Sociocultural Development Program
The Protection Program

The action for each program are very specific and include activities and projects as well as a budget. Budgets for the next five years for each program were developed using real costs. The projected five year costs per program, which is presented in the chart below, show that the mayor expenses in the next five years will be undertaken facilities and agri-forestry programs. .



Estimates of the cost of the first five years of this revitalization strategy amount to CUP 5 746 821 and 2 098 068 USD. The Park expects to raise these funds from five primary sources:

- a continuation of government support,
- the investment of Cuban and foreign entities,
- collaboration for development as seed funds for specific projects,
- and the commercialization of its agricultural, forestry and recreational products.

As a result of the capacity built through this strategic process, the Park has been able to assure its government funding, is beginning its first investment project with a Cuban enterprise in the area of agriculture, has successfully raised funds from international agencies from Canada, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg and the United States. Cuba has recently opened itself to the intervention of foreign NGO´s and many Canadian and European non-governmental organizations have

established relationships with Cuban partners. The challenge in this case was the fact that the Park is a state entity and as such an unusual partner for foreign NGO´s. In this context, the relationship with Cuban NGO´s became a strategic issue for the development of a fundraising strategy for the Park. Although the Park has been able to attract funds directly, by far the largest source of funds will be coming through Cuban partners.

The results of the strategic process -ie. the capacity to present strategies, goals, objectives and actions in an organized and coherent manner- has been a great asset to fundraising. The team has found that the situational analysis is a useful tool in the development of problem statements and that projects have easily evolved from the program objectives. With the background of the strategic process, the team was able to quickly master the basics of the project development process and learn to formulate proposal.

At the end of the first phase of the project, the Team had 6 funded projects, including the CUI´s Phase 2 project for a total of US$216,000. It also had five proposals pending approval which together amounted to US$559,000. The table below lists the funded projects and their funders.

FUNDED	**Funder**
Utilization of natural systems for the treatment of residuals to the Almendares River	Canadian Embassy Fund
Restoration of Forest Park and the construction of the Ecological Classroom	Junta de Andalucia, Spain
The Forest of Pogolotti	Terra Nova through the Foundation for Natur and Man
An Edible Landscape: The development of Agriculture in the PMH	OXFAM-Canada
Continuation of Solid Wastes Project	Oxfam-Belgium
Support for the Park´s Nursery	Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba
Revitalization of the Parque Metropolitano de La Habana (Phase 2)	Canadian Urban Institute
TOTAL	**$216,000**

In the last months the Park staff has also been exploring the possibilities of promoting foreign investment in the Park by working with selected groups and individuals in projects to be presented to the Cuban government for approval. Two projects are being worked on. The first is a mixed venture with Canadian partners in a nursery that would serve commercial as well as the Park´s needs. The second is a vegetarian restaurant near the restores Forest Park. This is being done with Chilean partners.

Implementation. The timely execution of projects is key both to the progress of the revitalization strategy as well as to continued success in fundrasing. Given the current situation in the country, project implementation is fraught with problems, many of them very hard to resolve. The third year of the project focuses on basic support for project implementation, which will be expanded in the next phase of the project.

Six key projects have been funded already and are now in the process of implementation. Three projects have begun leading to the goal of reforestation

- **The restoration of Forest Park**. This project begins the restoration of the area of the former national botanical garden, which is in great disrepair. The project involves reforestation with specific species, the reconstruction of trails and the reforestation of the margins of the Mordazo River. Funds for this project come from the Junta de Andalucia.

- **The Pogolotti Forest.** An example of the kind of reforestation project the Park aspires to promote, the Forest of Pogolotti arose out of the request from members of the community to restore an ancestral forest in their area. Located in the back of la Isla del Polvo, the forest of royal palms, *ceibas* (banyans) and *framboyans* will cover a 2 hectares on a hillside bordering the Santoyo Brook, an affluent of the Almendares. This is the original site of the project. Funding for the project was obtained from the Italian environmental NGO Terranova. The project is a collaboration between the Park and the Foundation for Nature and Man with the Park as the partner in charge of implementation. Collabora-ting with the Park in the planning and execution of the project are members of the Popular Council No 5 in Pogolotti and members of the Grupo Alafia, a cultural group working with neighborhood youth in rescuing and enhancing afro-cuban culture in the area.

  The one year project includes the planning of the project, which is being designed in collaboration with the activists, the clearing and readying of the land, the planting of the trees, and the replacement of trees that are not successful. The project also includes the a 3 year maintenance plan to be developed and carried out in conjunction with the community involved. Finally, the project also includes the organization of several cultural activities in the site with the hope that once again the community will use the forest in the same way that it was used by their ancestors. Work to date has included the development of the executive plan, the clearing and preparation of the land, the orgaqnziation of community plantings.

- **The urban agriculture project.** Funded by Oxfam Canada, this is the start of the Park´s investment in the development of agriculture in the Park area. A thorough analysis of past efforts in this direction revealed that the best potential for development lay (1) in the organiza-tion and support of the current farmers in the Park and in the creation of small farms of three to four hectares, where the farmer could live and cultivate the land.

  This project involves the development of the first 4 hectares farm and a service center to address the technical needs of the 53 farmers in the Park area. The farm will introduce organic farming methods to the agriculture of the Park as well as an integrated ecological organization where the residuals of one area of the production process serve as inputs to the sustenance of other areas. The Ministry of Construction Materials has sold at very low cost the farmer´s house, which will serve as a demonstration of the Cuban Sandino construction method. The area includes a small natural water treatment system. The service center will provide tools, the rental of animals and tractors and seeds to the rest of the farmers in the area. The idea here is to engage and support the local producers while resources are obtained for the development of the individual farms. Workshops and demonstrations on organic agriculture and other themes will also be part of the work of the center,

  The project advanced considerably on the development of the farm and less so in the development of the service center. Materials for the house have been obtained and construction will begin shortly. The land has been cleared and an initial tilling has begun; in the spring it will be divided in parcels for crop rotation. Solutions have been negotiated for access of water for the house and for cultivation.

Towards the Environmental Education Goal, the mayor project is:

- **The construction of the Ecological Classroom**.. The ecological classroom is planned as the center for the Park´s environmental education efforts. It will include offices for the Park´s environmental education program, space for a library which will house a collection of environmental education materials on the urban environment and urban rivers and meeting space for workshops and seminars as well as interest circles with Young Pioneers from nearby schools. The project begun in 1992 with a grant from the World Wildlife Fund for the equipment for the Ecological classroom. Matching Cuban funds for the construction of the classroom were not made available so the project lingered until 1995 when the Junta de Andalucía in Spain made funds available for the construction of the ecological classroom and the construction of access roads into the area. The inauguration of the ecological classroom is scheduled for November 14th, 1997.

- **Recycling Project in Puentes Grandes Schools.** This project, begun three years ago with funds from the Cuban Council of Churches now continues with assistance from Oxfam-Belgium. The project involves children in groups called Entorno Limpio which work with their families and neighbors in the recycling of solid wastes.

In the environmental restoration goal, the following projects are being undertaken:

- **The Natural Water Treatment Project** . Also located in Pogolotti, the project involves the construction of a wetland that will treat the residuals of a population of 500 people. The treated water will be used for agriculture in the area. The project was designed by the Center of Hydraulic Investigations of the Technology Institute Jose Antonio Echeverria with consultation from Erin Mahoney, an engineer from the Toronto firm Proctor and Redfern. This is the first project of its kind built in Cuba and is funded in part by the Canadian Embassy Fund with a substantial contribution from the provincial government.

  The project is being built by a local construction firm and will be maintained by the Park in collaboration with the residents that live nearby. Because of the limited experience in Cuba with this type of system, this project includes a two year research component directed at determining the effectiveness of the system using local flora and in the local climate conditions. The research component will be conducted in collaboration scientists at the Center of Hydraulic Investigations of the Technological Institute Jose Antonio Echeverría. Work to date has included the development of the executive plan, which led to important alterations in the proposal for the site and the orientation of the system. This has caused delay in the execution of the construction.

The initial experience of implementation has revealed that there needs to be special attention to the monitoring and oversight of the process. Economic conditions in Cuba make this process quite complex even in projects with ample financial backing in hard currency. Delays are common which is a great challenge for program planners.

2.2 DEVELOPING STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

As was stated earlier, the Park project began and moved a long period of time as a purely technical and administrative project with little participation of any type on the part of those affected by it, either positively or negatively. Early surveys and interviews, taken as part of the strategy development process revealed that the population had little and often wrong information about the size and make-up of the Park or about the implications of its development for the neighborhoods. For example, some residents were found to believe that the Park would be a source of housing, which is very scarce in the city of Havana while others thought that the development of the Park would do away with their neighborhoods. Of course, neither one is true, but this reflects some of the misconceptions that arise when projects are not fully explained to those involved.

Although there were relationships established with local governments these were sporadic. Municipal governments and the Popular Councils were found to have more information than the public but not enough to really understand the Park´s impact in the territory. Relationships with some Provincial bodies was fuller -the Park is a provincial entity- but not anywhere near the diversity, quality or quantity that would guarantee support for the Park´s programs. At the central government level, there were few relationships established with Ministries, for example, which have decision making power over the future of the industries in

FIGURE 3. FLOW OF INFORMATION, CONSULTATION AND DECSION IN PARQUE METROPOLITANO AT THE START OF THE PROJECT.

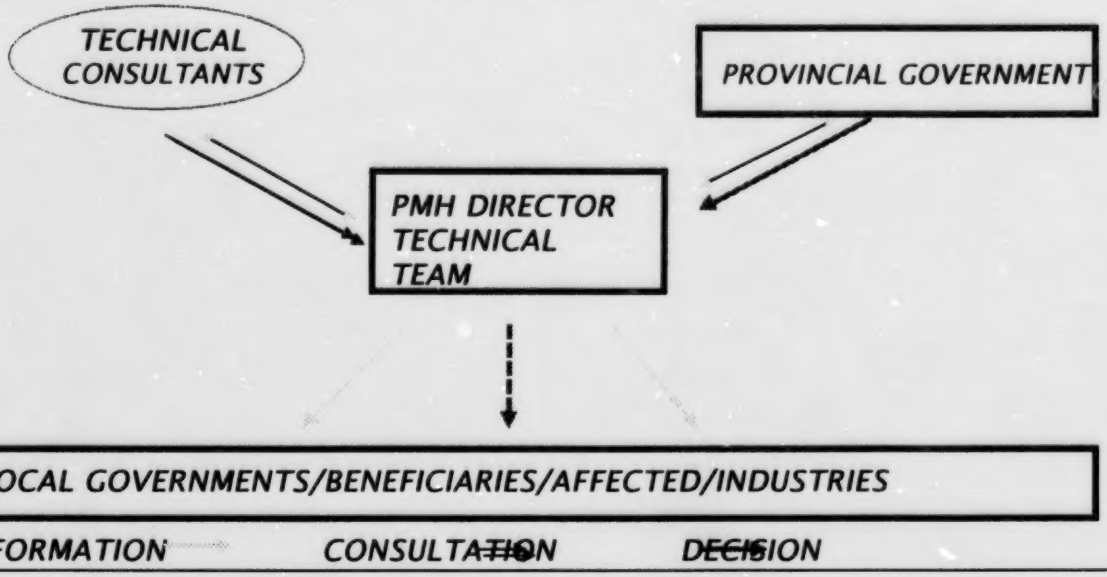
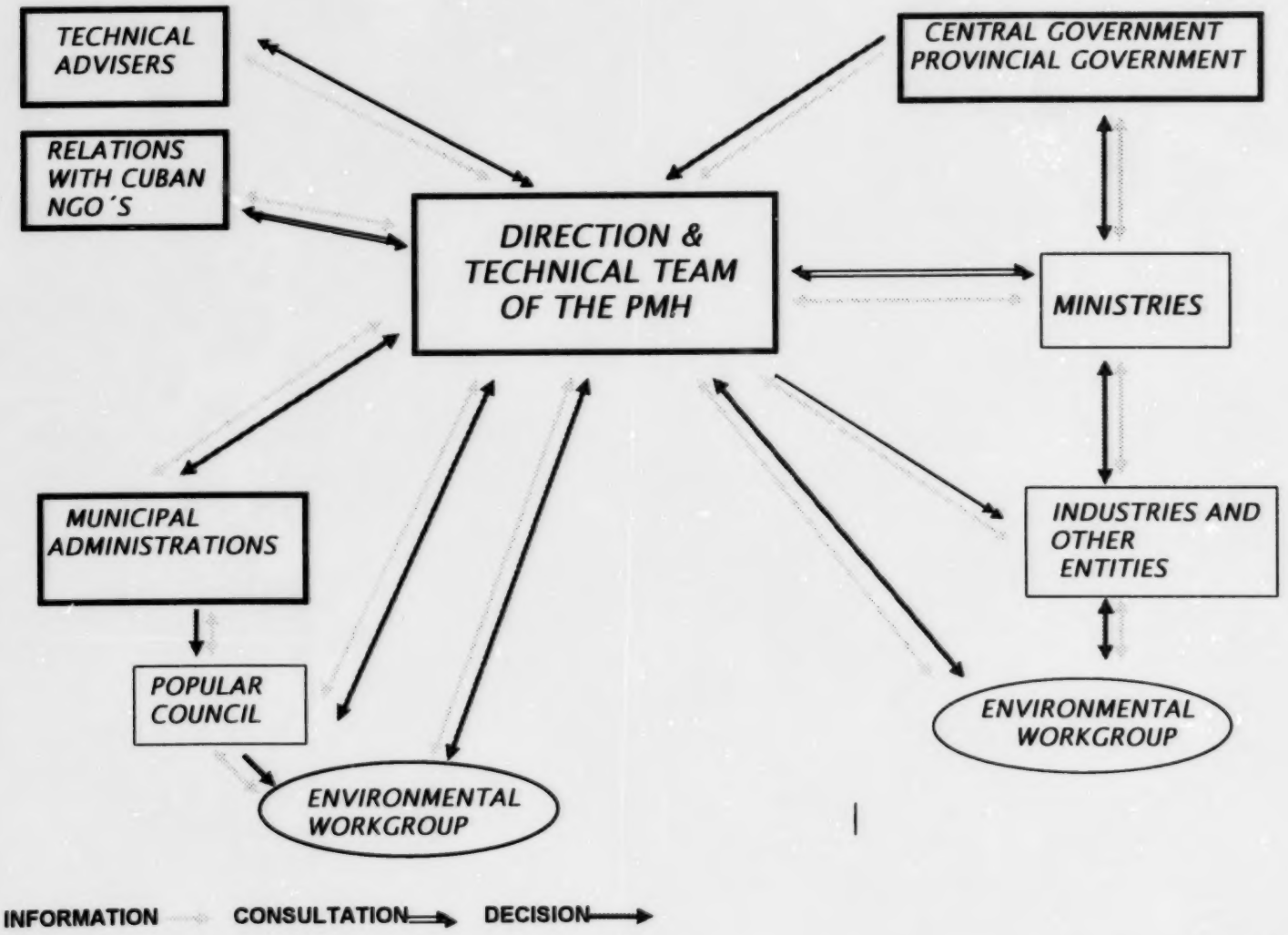


FIGURE 4. PARTICIPATORY MODEL FOR THE PARQUE METROPOLITANO



- the sponsorship and participation in **national and international conferences** touching on areas of concern. The Park has sponsored the *Almendares SOS* international conference together with the Foundation for Nature and Man and several others focused on urban green areas. It has also participated actively in conferences regarding the environment, popular participation in urban projects, reforestation, and others areas.
- The park has also held regular information sessions with sectors of stakeholders or others interested in the Park such as Ministries, government agencies, professionals with common interests, Cuban NGO´s, foreign NGO´s.

Consultation. The Park has established **formal consulting relationships** with a groups of professionals whose professional interests are akin to the Park and with Cuban NGO´s. The former includes academics and practicing professionals in central and provincial entities. They meet three times a year or so to review the Park´s plans and regularly receive information about the Park and participate directly in consultation around specific projects..

Supported by the Center for European Studies which attends to the collaboration of European NGO´s in Cuba, the Park formed a *Consultant´s Committee of Cuban NGO´s* formed to advise the Park in its collaboration with national and foreign NGO´s. In this committee are NGO´s with interests in the environment, urban development and in community participation.

Informal consultation has become an even more key element of the Park´s process as it establishes key linkages with Ministries with responsibility for the contaminating industries or for the development of urban agriculture or in the tasks of protection of the environment, water treatment, etc. The consultations take place between the leaderships or between the professionals of both entities and often leads to the solution of bottlenecks and specific resource problems. Meetings and consultations with Ministries overseeing the industries that are strong polluters of the River have been held with important results. For example the Ministry of Construction Materials has agreed to have all of its factories in compliance with Park standards by the end of 1997 and remove 7 of the industries that are strong polluters. Similar agreements are being sought with the Ministry of the Food Industry. Initial discussion of the future removal from the Park territory of several high polluting industries has begun. The goal here is to relocate as many industries as economically feasible and that those that have to remain comply strictly with environmentally safe standards

Joint Planning. A process of more comprehensive and integral participation was begun with two key sectors of the Park´s stakeholders: industries and the popular councils. The process implemented is a five step process based on the generic elements of the planning but which adds two initial steps to allow the technician or professional to become familiar with the context in which the planning will take place, be it the industry or the community and as well as to allow the communities and industries to become familiar with the basic elements of the project. The steps and the basic component of each step are described below.

STEPS	COMPONENTS
INITIAL APPROACH	• Community Description • Sharing Information • Identification of potential participants
INTEGRATION	• Organization of Planning Groups • Training • Development of Joint Vision
JOINT PLANNING	• Participatory Diagnosis or needs assessment

	• Priority Setting and Development of Planning Goals • Development of Objectives and plans of action
IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING	• Development of an Implementation Plan • Execution of the Plan • Monitoring
EVALUATION	• Evaluation of Accomplishments in relationship to objectives • Evaluation of Results or Impact of the Project

The Park has undertaken joint planning processes with two sectors: industries and the population through the Popular Councils. The advance with each group is described below.

Work with Industries. There are twenty five industries located in the Park, including two beer factories, two paper mills, 3 open pit mines, an ice cream and baby food factories, several industries of constructions materials, and others. Most of these are high polluters of both the environment and the river. In December of last year the Park prioritized the work with 10 industries on the basis of the following criteria:

1. the industry´s level of pollution (with a preference towards high polluters)
2. scheduled to remain in the Park
3. location (in priority councils)
4. ministry to which they belong (priority ministries are the Ministry of Food Industries, Ministry of Basic Industries and Ministry of Construction Materials

The general approach follows the one outlined above, with the peculiarities of the work in the industries. The Environmental Group in the industry is made up of both the administration and the unions of each industry with the goal is of developing specific recommendations and plans for each industry. The work requires individualized diagnosis of the environmental problems in each industry and a plan of specific actions. Work has recently begun with the first industry where the Park, together with the workers, will begin an environmental assessment of the industry. Part of the CUI´s Phase 2 project focuses on the development of these industrial diagnosis and recommendations.

Work in the Popular Councils: Within the area of the Park there are 9 Popular Councils, which the Park has chosen as the unit from which it will organize participation in the project since this is the most basic and smaller political-administrative unit. The Popular Council is made up of the delegates of the Council zone who are elected directly by the constituents, and include representatives of culture, sports, health, education, gastronomic services, and other entities critical to the conditions of the neighborhood.

Given the degree of inexperience in environmental work among the population and its leadership at the community level, the Park organized an **Environmental Work Group** in each of the Councils to be the center of this work and to serve as a focus of training and environmental education on the part of the Park.

At this point in time the Park has organized the work groups in four priority Councils: Pogolotti-Belen-Finlay, Miramar, Palatino and Puentes Grandes. These four were chosen because the main projects that the Park was undertaking were located in these Councils and there was a need to inform the community about them, to obtain their support and to assist the Park in the planning of some of them. The groups meet periodically to work on specific tasks such as the environmental diagnosis of the community, which has taken place in all four councils and to take up the planning in projects such

as the Pogolotti Forest or consult with the technicians on issues pertinent to projects as is the case in the construction and maintenance of the constructed wetland.

In the implementation phase, the Groups have helped to mobilize the population to, for example, clear the ground in the hill that is to become the Pogolotti Forest. The make up of these groups is diverse and includes from the president of popular councils, to teachers, family doctors, housewives and retired citizens.

2.3 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Training and capacity building are the cornerstones of the collaboration between the Canadian Urban Institute and the Park team. These activities take place in a variety of forms including training internships for Cuban professionals in Canada, training missions to Cuba by Canadian professionals and the day to day training and capacity building through the ongoing interaction of the Team and the CUI project manager.

Internships in Canada: A total of 13 Cubans have traveled to Canada for training internships. These took place on:

- **March 1995**. The Director of the Park, its Chief designer and two other professionals traveled to Toronto in March 1995 This group participated in a variety of seminars and workshops on strategic planning in preparation for the project.[7]

- **August 1995.** This delegation visited a broad spectrum of Canadian government and non-governmental organizations in several Canadian cities. This trip helped to solidify government support to the Park project in general and the CUI-Park collaboration in particular. [8]

- **August 1996.** Three members of the Park team (Jose Fornés, Marilyn Fernández and Ileana Saborit) traveled to Canada for a 2 week internship and one Canadian professional (Charles Bens) worked with the Team and the Environmental work group in Havana. The Canadian internships focused on public participation in environmental education, landscape architecture and ongoing consultation with Canadian professionals on the development of the Park´s natural water treatment system. The interns engaged in exchanges pertinent to their areas of expertise and interest and also made presentations in universities in the Toronto area.

- **June 1997**. Mr. R. Roque, Vice President of the Provincial Administration Council and Ms Maura Salmeron, Vice Director of the Park visited Toronto and Kitchener for a week to observe Park management and river restoration practices.

- **September 1997**. A three member Cuban delegation accompanied by the CUI project manager visited Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal for two weeks. The delegation consisted of Rodrigo Malmierca, Chief of Developed Countries, Ministry of Foreign Investment and Collaboration, Julio Reyes Villafruela, Director of the Metropolitan Park of Havana and Guadalupe Gonzalez, Planner at the PMH. The focus f the trip was to observe different experiences in local economic development. The delegation made presentations about the project at CIDA and York University.

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[7] *See Report of the Cuban Delegation's Study Tour to Canada, March-April 1995*
[8] *Programa de Revitalizacion del Parque Metropolitano, Informe de Mision, Septiembre 1995*

Canadian Consultation in Cuba: In addition to CUI staff administrative missions, 9 Canadian professionals have traveled to Cuba to provide consultation to this project in several critical areas. They include:

- **Consultation from a Team of 4 Canadian Professionals that produced a broad based evaluation of the economic, design and participation issues facing the Park**.. This group included Chales Bens, Michael Hough, Ron Tingle and _____.[9]

- **Three Month Internship for Canadian Student.** Farah Ally, a student from York University spent three months in Havana assisting in the early stages of the project. September to December 1995.

- **Consultation from Park Administrator Jim Lowden.** The two week visit focused on administrative and planning issues. November 1995

- **Consultation from Engineer Erin Mahoney from Proctor and Redfern**. The focus of Ms Mahoney´s consultation was on the constructed wetland project in Pogolotti and on natural and solar aquatic systems in general. March 1996

- **Training from Consultant Charles Bens**. The training focused on Team development and problem solving. March 1996

- **Training from Consultant Charles Bens**. The two week training in June 1996 focused on integration of programs and the development of a joint vision for the work between the Park Team and the Environmental Work Groups.

- **Training on Participatory Planning and Environmental Education Strategies.** Two week training and consultation by David Stonehouse, the Coordinator of the Task Force to Bring Back the Don in the City of Toronto.

- **Training of Project, Financial and Personnel Management** with Ivan Lorent, an engineer at Dillon Consulting in Toronto.

On site training sponsored by the project has taken place in the following areas:

- **Financial Management and Financial Controls**: Seminar on the basic elements of financial management and the development of financial controls for team members. October 1995.

- **Project Development and Proposal Writing**. Seminar on project development and proposal writing took place in June of 1996. Ongoing supervised practice on proposal writing continues.

- **Environmental Diagnosis**. Seminar for Environmental Workgroups and Team on conducting an Environmental Diagnosis held in October 1996.

- **Project Evaluation**. 10 week course on project evaluation design taught by the CUI project manager through the Sociology Department at the University of Havana. Three team members attended along with 20 other students and practitioners. This course is being offered once a year as part of the collaboration.

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[9] C. Bens, `*Cuban Project Report*; M. Hough, *Report on Three Week Visit, May 28 to June 18, 1995*; R. Tingle, *Havana Metropolitan Park* and E. Fernandez, G. Gonzalez, C. Batista and G. Garcia, *Resultados del Taller de Verano del Parque Metropolitano*

- **Participatory Planning**. Training for new employees, September - November, 1997.

2.4 CUBA-CANADA EXCHANGE

An important area of activity in this first phase has been exchange of professionals and functionaries between Canada and Cuba promoted by the project. Twenty one Cubans and 10 Canadians (not including CUI staff) have participated in this prolific exchange focused on issues related to Municipal Planning, the environment and participation. Given the fact that this was one of the first Cuba-Canada Collaboration projects, this facet of the work has been very instrumental in learning about each other, building trust and opening the way to fruitful cooperation. The specific professional assignments are listed under the CAPACITY BUILDING section of this report.

In addition to the exchange inherent in the project, the CUI-PMH project has promoted exchange and collaboration among other Canadian entities and the Metropolitan Park and the City of Havana. An ongoing relationship with CUSO and Oxfam-Canada has been developed that is strong and of mutual benefit. The team has hosted IDRC, functionaries from the Canadian Public Works and Government Services and ECOSTRAT International. The project has also met with Canadian firms such as Environmental Design and Management LTD., Dillon and Proctor and Redfern, which were part of a Canadian Trade Mission that visited Havana in April of 1996.

In addition, the project has partially supported the travel of Rosa Maria Cartaya, from the Fundación de la Naturaleza y el Hombre, co sponsor with the Parque Metropolitano of the Conference *Almendares S.O.S.* for the purpose of meeting with Canadian environmental organizations to publicize the conference.

2.6 NETWORKING AND COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

The Park Project holds ongoing relations with several Cuban NGO´s that support the work of the Park. This incipient but strong relationship is an important area of endeavor for the Park since it is tied to its evolving strategy for funding. The Park had established links with the Center Martin Luther King, which participates in the Park´s Steering Committee through its director and where the Park staff are currently participating in seminars on popular education. This is also the case of the Movimiento por la Paz y La Soberania de los Pueblos, one of Cuba´s peace organizations, who support he Park by publishing the newsletter at a low rate and participating in the steering committee.

An example of the kind of relationship sought is the relationship being developed between the Park and the Foundation for Nature and Man. The Park has collaborated with the foundation on such activities as the exploration of the Almendares River and the ***Almendares S.O.S.*** conference attended by about 60 Cuban and foreign specialists focused on the problems of the River. The conference led to a series of conclusions which are being followed up jointly by the Park and the Foundation and some of which -the reforestation program the treatment of residuals, the treatment of solid wastes, etc- are part of joint propo-sals submitted by the Park and the foundation. Ongoing work is planned with each of these organiza-tions over the next months, including the definition of areas of collaboration and the formulation of joint projects.

Other NGO´s with which the Park collaborates or is in the process of developing projects are:

- **Martin Luther King Memorial Center** , a service center with strong religious content that specializes in the training in Brazilian Pablo Freire´s method of popular education. The Park is seeking to

develop a project with the Center around the training of community based *promoters of the environment.*

- **Council of Churches**. The Council represents all denominations of protestant churches in Cuba and has an active program of giving and community development work. The Council is the Park´s partner in a project dealing with solid wastes and the equiping of the Ecological classroom with funds from World Wildlife Fund. The Council has recently donated funds for the reforestation program and is working with the Park in developing the second integral farm in the PMH.
- **Habitat-Cuba**. Like in other countries, Habitat works in the development of housing and speciliazes in their development through participatory methods, using Argentinian architect Roberto Livingston Method of *surgery of houses* and the *arquitect of the community.* The Park is working with Habitat Cuba in the development of a project to restore housing and public buildings in the Calzada de Puentes Grandes which crosses the Park in its most densely populated area.
- **Cubasolar** promotes the use of solar energy in Cuba and the Park hopes to become a demosntration site for some of this technology.
- The **Grupo para el Desarrollo Integral de la Capital** is a think tank on urban issues which provides considerable suppor to the Park in a veruiety of areas including urbanistic, technical and politcal.
- **Fundacion de la Naturaleza y el Hombre** is engaged in ongoing collaboration with the Park in a variety of projects including the Bosque of Pogolotti and the project of environmental restoration proposed to the European community.
- The **Cuban Association for Organic Agriculture** has provided ongoing support to the Park on the development of its agriculture project.

Supported by the Center for European Studies which attends to the collaboration of European NGO´s in Cuba, the Park organized and held an activity with Cuban NGO´s which was attended by ten with specific interests in the environment, urban development and in community participation. Held in September 12, 1996 the meeting consisted of a presentation of the different areas of the Park project and a discussion of the possible areas of collaboration. In November a Consultant´s Committee of Cuban NGO´s was formed to advise the Park in its collaboration with Cuban and foreign NGO´s.

The Park also collaborates with other NGO´s operating in Cuba such as CIERI -the Center for the Investigation and Study of Interamerican Reality- with whom it co-sponsored the stay in Cuba of a German student working on strategies for the cleanup of the Almendares River.

3. SUCCESS FACTORS, CONSTRAINTS, REPLICABILITY AND SUSTAINABILTY

Success Factors. Project monitoring and interim evaluations point to the fact that the project has met its goals and objectives. In fact, observers both in Cuba and Canada agree that the project has succeeded in several areas, the most important of which are :

- the development of an technical team capable of approaching problems and tasks in an interdisciplinary manner.
- the introduction and practice of planning, both strategic and operational, to the PMH
- the introduction of the concepts, the mechanisms and the experience of stakeholder participation in the planning of the Park and in the implementation of its development projects
- the training and guidance in project development and fundraising
- the growing ties between Canadian professionals, organizations and firms and the Parque Metropolitano de La Habana.
- support in the implementation of a communication program in the Park that led to a greater recognition of the Park among the population.

Several factors have contributed to these accomplishments:

1. The Educational status and preparation of the Technical Team potentiated the training and capacity building of the project.

This project's main focus has been the development of the Technical Team through direct training as well as ongoing technical assistance. In an earlier section we listed all these activities which have been substantial. Nevertheless, training alone would not have achieved the level of integration of concepts and practices if there had not been a strong base of education and preparation. The technical team has a strong background in their specialties and a strong professional motivation in regards to the project. This was very fertile ground for the training and the ongoing technical assistance.

2. The support and prodding of government entities in the execution of the project.

It is very clear that without the strong support of central and provincial authorities this project would not have successful. This support has manifested itself in authorization to undertake many activities that are new and experimental. These range from administrative support such as the approval of a hard currency account for the project and of the ongoing presence of a representative to the implementation of a complex public participation strategy and to the experimental projects in Cuba such as the implementation of a natural waste water treatment system. Overall their support has always been an asset to the project.

Along with the support, these bodies have also consistently communicated a sense of urgency in regards to this project that often pushed the project to take on activities that proved very successful. The best example of this has was the start of the implementation of projects even as the planning moved forward. This, in many ways, *made real* the planning process in that is became evident how and why it could be useful. Although at times this sense of urgency also demonstrated impatience about the process of analysis and discussion inherent in planning, it also always reminded the Team that in order to be successful, planning had *to take a landing*, that is to become concrete and real to all stakeholders. This was accomplished through the development of demonstration projects that began to be implemented in the midst of planning.

3. The mixture of theory and practice, of planning and implementation.

Prodded on by external pressures, the team, as it developed a programmatic strategy also began to develop specific projects that were funded and implemented. This allowed the team to test its plan making by having to implement that plan very quickly in a real project. In the process, important planning lessons have become clearer, illustrated in a way that would been impossible to do had they not had real practice from which to draw those lessons. The importance of foresight, precision and flexibility in the planning process were learned in practice and served to fine tune and polish the overall strategic plan as well as projects that were formulated later.

The Team also was able to see how, as they learned the skills and language of planning, they were able to attract funding that they had not been able to attract before. The reward for adopting a planning practice was quick and directly related to this learning. This was key in maintaining a momentum in the project.

4. The technical capacity and the approach towards consultation and project management of the Canadian experts and partners.

It was well recognized by the Team that n every occasion, the project brought to Cuba top notch experts in their field of consultation and/or training. These experts were also people with a great capacity to communicate their knowledge and to learn to adapt it quickly to Cuban reality. Both the

knowledge and the attitude of Canadian experts earned them the respect of the Team and of others and served to reinforce the resources and learning which they brought to the team.

In general the CUI has been successful in this project because it has built on his strengths: its experience in setting up international projects; its contact with high level professionals in Canada with experience and knowledge relevant to the project; its approach to project management which allows great latitude and discretion at the local level; the match between the expertise of the project managers and the tasks of the project.

Constraints. As is true of any project, this one has met important constraints in achieving its goals and has had to develop solutions to deal with them. These have included from inexperience in dealing with financial matters to problems inherent in the dialogue between cultures (language barriers, different perspectives and ways of approaching issues, etc.) But perhaps the one that has required most thought and analysis has been process of acceptance of an innovation both within the organization and in the organization ´s relationship with the environment.

As is known, organizations represent systems of relationships, where change to one affects others, some times in predictable and others unpredictable ways. The introduction of innovations in one area, for this reason, affect all areas of the organization as well as the organization´s relationship with its environment. These changes, if they are not taking place everywhere within the organization or accompanied by similar changes in other areas of the organizational environment, can lead to uneven development and misunderstandings within the organization.

Early on in the process, the project foresaw the potential of this problem and, in a conscious way, began to address it conceptualizing the adoption of new techniques as a process that included several steps. For example, in a first instance ,there was a need to recognize the objective of the innovation and to develop a mechanism for the introduction and trial of the technique that was non-threatening. The project has included significant training and capacity building in the area of the innovation that has involved the majority of the staff. The team has been able to document and analyze its advances and successes as well as its problems, that is, it has seen the payoff of the adoption of the innovation and understands its limitations. In this way, the project has attempted to promote the successful adoption of the innovation.

These steps were adopted both in the introduction of the participatory process as well as in the introduction of planning as a method of organizing work. In both cases, we can say that there has been significant success in the adoption of the innovations but that there have been limitations. This is more the case in the case of planning as a practice than in the case of the implementation of a process of participation.

The lack of adoption of the planning practice is evident in the continued use of improvisation as a method of work. Over thirty years of central planning have made Cubans familiar with the basic planning terms -goals, objectives, master plans, work plans- as well as with the advantages and disadvantages of planning. Some of the negative experiences with planning has led administrators to develop great expertise at *improvising* and *muddling through*. It was seen as more effective, faster and less cumbersome. In the Cuban context, one could probably never let go of improvisation since the economic situation leads to great levels of uncertainty. But the goal was to increase the capacity of the group to analyze the situation and develop strategies to deal with the problems that arise.

The limitations in the adoption of planning as a practice are due to several situations:

- **The late or non-adoption of the practice by key individuals in the organization**. This has been due primarily to their lack of involvement in the strategy process, their strong commitment to and success at improvising or other reasons.

- **The expansion and turnover in the Park Team**. Of the 7 member Team that began the project two years ago, 5 are left. Early in the process, the Team was expanded to the whole central staff of the PMH which includes 17 people. Most of these have participated in the strategy development process but to different degrees. Among those that have received at least some level of training, there has been a significant turnover. (Salaries in the Park are low, even by Cuban standards). Staff that was trained has been replaced with staff that have not gone through the process. In the absence of an in-service training program This results in an unevenness of knowledge and experience within the Team.
- **The fact that all other organizations with which the Park deals continues to improvise rather than plan.** This has led not only to misunderstanding or questioning of the process on the part of some stakeholders but for role confusion on the part of some of the Park´s work partners. The latter manifests itself in the fact that often the Park has a more clear idea than the partner in regards to what it wants to accomplish with a project.

In order to offset some of these problems, CUI proposes to (1) hold a seminar for all staff where we review the gains of the last two years, the basic elements of the planning process and (2) in an experimental way, conduct some strategy development workshops with key partners of the PMH, like for example the Foundation of Natrure and Man with which the Park works jointly in several projects.

Replicability. Although the results of a project depend on the context, the design and the execution and in that sense each project is different, there are elements of this project that are replicable both in Cuba and in other places.

First of all, the process of strategy development applied here is a well established and successful one and it worked reasonably well in the context of an old project in need of revitalization. This process could be applied to projects needing re-direction or where a new investment or initiative is about to be made.

Secondly, the process of participation implemented in the planning of the PMH is fully replicable in other urban projects. The steps are applicable to almost any project seeking to make itself more participatory. To promote the replication of this aspect of the project, Park staff and the CUI have made several presentations on the Park´s method and produced a manual on participation in technical projects. Next year, the staff will work on a manual for conducting urban community environmental diagnosis based on the Park´s experience in 9 Popular Councils.

Third, the mixture of theory and practice in the context of building of planning capacity in an organization where the concept is new helps is an effective way of making real the more subtle aspects of the planning process. Materials developed for the training of Park staff in proposal writing have been given to other organizations.

Fourth, the process of capacity building works well when it can be followed through over time, be it by the repeated visit of the same expert or by the ongoing support of a knowledgeable person, although not necessarily an expert in the field. There has been value in the continuity afforded by a "on the ground" person to help the project move along.

Fifth, and this is more relevant to the Cuban context, the effective collaboration between government and NGO´s is possible and useful to both. This has been an important lesson from this project that can be applied to others like it.

Sustainabilty: The success of any technical assistance program, like the CUI project, is the capacity of the recipients to act independently of the program. The CUI project has a strong explicit training component and provides ongoing attention to skill building in critical areas. Although no project

results in a completely even adoption of new learning across all participants, at this point we can assure that all skills -planning, fundraising, project development, proposal writing, facilitation of meetings- are finely honed in several different individuals and that collectively, the team possesses them all. The conditions for sustainability are given, particularly if the Park implements an inservice training program that periodically trains new staff and hones the skills of the older personnel.

But as our discussion above about the constraints that this project has faced, it is clear that sustainability depends more on the internal and external factors that are tied to the future of planning as a method of work in the Park and participation as a vehicle for the input of stakeholders into this planning process. These internal factors include choosing to plan over improvisation and supporting the process of participation in the Park´s planning and development. The external factors include the rate of acceptance of this method by other organizations and the understanding of government entities above the PMH as to the wisdom of the adoption of these practices.

It is clear to outside observers that there has been a change in the Park. Today the Park staff is clearer about what it wants to do and how it wants to go about doing it. Today, although the work has just begun, it is a more participatory project that it was two years ago. These changes have not gone unnoticed as it has also been hard to ignore that these changes have resulted in success in the search for resources for the Park´s projects. This reality speaks volumes and although the project has not sought impact beyond its mandate, the lessons of the effectiveness of planning and the importance of participation have not been overlooked.

Include Achievements in relationship to Objectives. Sent on 15/10/97